ISSUE 27

WRESTLING THEN & NOW

APRIL 1992

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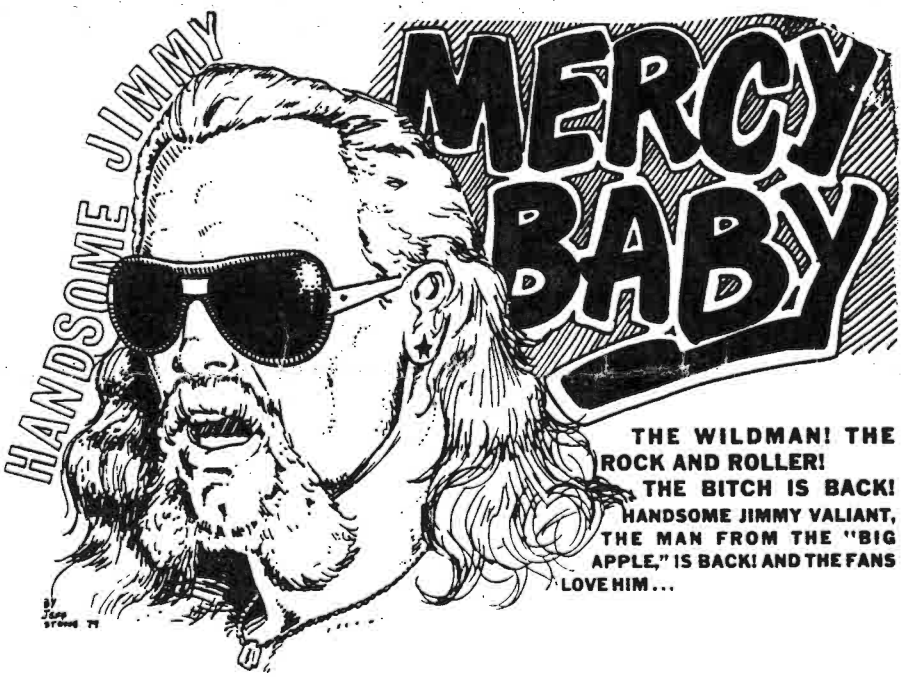
MEMPHIS THEN...


HANDSOME JIMMY
MERCY BABY
THE WILDMAN! THE ROCK AND ROLLER! THE BITCH IS BACK! HANDSOME JIMMY VALIANT, THE MAN FROM THE "BIG APPLE," IS BACK! AND THE FANS LOVE HIM...

TONIGHTS CARD

★ MAIN EVENT ★

SOUTHERN TAG TEAM TITLE MATCH
BILL DUNDEE & DUTCH MANTEL
—VS—
KOKO WARE & PHIL HICKERSON

THE FABULOUS ONES
—VS—
TOM PRITCHARD & PAT ROSE
w/SHERRI MARTEL

JERRY LAWLER
—VS—
TONY FALK

THE FANTASTICS
—VS—
THE SHEEPHERDERS

RIC CASEY
—VS—
DUNDEE'S GURU

THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS
—VS—
MEMPHIS VICE

TOJO YAMAMOTO
—VS—
TOM BRANCH

BILLY TRAVIS —VS— SPOILER

CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

AT THE MID-SOUTH COLISEUM

MONDAY DECEMBER 2ND 1985

WAYNE "HONKY TONK MAN" FARRIS & LARRY "MOONDOG" LATHAM

AND NOW...
(SEE PAGE 2)

THE LISTENING POST BY: EVAN GINZBURG
WT&N HITS MEMPHIS 1992

I recently had the extreme pleasure of visiting Memphis. Not only is it a fun place, it's a town with a sense of history.

If you walk down legendary Beale Street, you'll see sidewalk plaques honoring countless musical innovators. The clubs are literally a shrine to the greats of jazz, blues, R&B and Rock and Roll as huge posters of Otis Redding, Rufus Thomas, BB King, Al Green and others look down on clubgoers. Sun Records, original home of Elvis, Jerry Lee, Carl Perkins and Johnny Cash makes its home here as well, and when you tour the facilities you get a sense of what it must have been like when these giants created their classic sounds.

And then there's wrestling...

After 20 years of watching wrestling and seeing it live across this country and in Mexico, I FINALLY went to the Mid South Coliseum for a USWA show. Memphis wrestling may not be what it was in its glory days, but it still showed signs of life, and the afternoon card in the historic arena did not let me down. In an exciting scaffold match, Eric Embry beat the Dirty White Boy. Both juiced and DWB was legitimately hurt from the fall. Jerry Lawler and the Big Black Dog (a more ferocious JYD type) also had an exciting brawl. But nothing prepared me for the main-event. When Austin Idol no-showed, Lawler replaced him and Jerry along with Jeff Jarett brawled across the arena with the Moondogs. All four juiced and hit each other with everything in sight. It was a wild 3 3/4* main-event that did not exhibit a single wrestling hold, but was nonetheless thrilling. The critics can say what they want about Lawler and even Embry, but these guys put out and give their all for relatively small crowds. I sat with Brian Tramel who had not attended a show in 2 years, and he also enjoyed the wild antics.

After the show I waited by the dressing room door and found that the faces all signed autographs and the heels stayed in character, refusing all who got up the nerve to ask. Meanwhile a mob of kids and a few adults heartily booed them as they drove away. They weren't cartoon characters to these people--they were legit heroes and villains. For me it was a throwback to the "old days."

It was almost "quaint." I loved it...

The next night I caught a small show at a dogtrack in Arkansas. They ran the same main-event minus the blood and cut it by a few minutes, but it was nonetheless a wild 3 1/4* brawl. In a Battle Royale, Lawler and Embry were the last 2 in the ring and after a pounding, Lawler pulled down the strap of his tights and secured the victory. It was predictable and corny yet somehow dramatic. For the crowd it was magic...

Eric Embry signed autographs, but hid behind a door that night, so as not to kill "the image." I reminisced with him about his days in Florida, and he was gracious and intelligent. Sadly though, he summarized his feelings about wrestling by saying, "the good old days are gone."

He may very well be right, but I'm still so very glad that Memphis is alive and kicking...

OTHER NOTES

Accompanied on trip by WT&N columnist "Iron" Mike Einhorn, one of the nicest and funniest guys alive (although described by many as a troubled loner!)...Visited AL Green's church for Sunday services. One of the greatest experiences I've ever had...Took train to New Orleans for beginning of Mardi Gras. Also visited Mobile, Alabama which holds a Mardi Gras as well. Sadly, 10 years ago I probably could have caught great regional promotions in all these places but they are a dying breed...Speaking of regional promotions, WT&N's yearbook is finally ready. 50 pages on THE GREAT TERRITORIES- only $7...Enjoy the issue...

ARTICLE SUBMITTED BY EDDIE GOLDMAN/ COVER MATERIALS SUBMITTED BY BRIAN TRAMEL

August 5, 1933 LITERARY DIGEST

The Greatest Wrestler

Babe Ruth is getting on toward forty, and we write pieces about him full of admiring incredulity that one so ancient should still be able to step out there and smack that apple.

But when Ruth was born a young wrestler in Bombay, India, was hitting his championship stride; and to-day, at fifty-five, he is a champion still—an age at which a former sports idol in America would be all but forgotten. This man, Gama, a Jew turned Mohammedan, is accounted the greatest wrestler in the world to-day, for all the gruntings and heaving that go on in Madison Square Garden and similar arenas.

Not only is he top man in the world of wrestling. Jack Kofoed, writing in the New York *Evening Post*, is unable to think of any champion whose achievement equals his. He measures five feet, seven inches in height, weighs 260 pounds, and has not the faintest ripple of fat on his body. He has succeeded to the honors of Youssouf, the "Terrible Turk."

A few years ago Zbyszko the elder, a top flight wrestler if ever there were one, strong, swift, intelligent, took up an offer of $10,000 to visit Bombay and try his luck with Gama.

He went, he saw, he was conquered. Zbyszko was as strong as a hull, but in the hands of Gama he was about as much use as Fay Wray in the grip of King Kong. It was all over in eight seconds.

Afterward, according to Mr. Kofoed, "he said it was like wrestling with a wild animal. He felt that if he tried to get up and fight back he would be killed in the ring. Courage meant nothing in this case."

Foresighted Gama has arranged that his laurels, when he is through with them, shall go to his six-foot, seven-inch, 360-pound brother. And it will not be much healthier to try taking them from *him*. But this gigantic brother has never been able to floor Gama.

That this phenomenal wrestler will not come to America seems obvious. Nobody here could do a thing with him. He could, we read, dispose of Savoldi, DeGlane, Lewis, and a few others in half an hour. He is content to stay in India, "unconscious that we have at least four champions of the world in the United States."

SUNDAY'S RESULTS

At Mid-South Coliseum
MAIN EVENT — Jerry Lawler and Jeff Jarrett won by disqualification over the Moondogs. OTHER MATCHES — The Big Black Dog beat Jerry Lawler, disqualification; Kimala beat Koko B. Ware; Eric Embry beat the Dirty White Boy; The Dirty White Girl defeated Miss C. J.; Brian Christopher beat Tom Pritchard; Robert Fuller beat Doug Masters; Tony Faulk beat Ricky Hayes and Miss Texas beat Miss Jennifer.

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BACK ISSUE SPECIAL: ALL ISSUES IN A SINGLE PACKAGE- ONLY $20!

WRESTLING TRIVIA
Chapter One- Tag Teams

by
Evan Ginzburg and Howard Roth

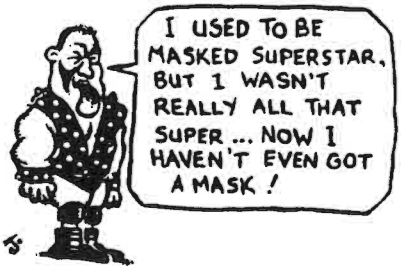
© 1986 Evan Ginzburg and Howard Roth

CONTEST- FIRST READER WITH ALL THE CORRECT ANSWERS WINS A NOSTALGIA WRESTLING TAPE OF MY CHOOSING-- NOTE: THIS PIECE WAS WRITTEN IN 1986 AND ANSWERS SHOULD TAKE THIS INTO CONSIDERATION!

Today, most tag team matches have a one fall limitation to them whereas in years past, most tag team matches were two out of three fall affairs.

Now, let's test our knowledge of tag team wrestling!

1. Who were the original members of the flamboyant Hollywood Blondes?
2. What nicknames were utilized by colorful Johnny and Jimmy Valiant?
3. What are the names of the muscular and menacing Road Warriors?
4. What tag team was known as the Greek Wrecking Crew?
5. What noted tag team emphatically claimed to be from New Mexico?
6. Who comprised the rough and ready team known as the Texas Outlaws?
7. Former N.W.A. champ Harley Race was a long-time tag partner with which top grappler?
8. Which tough grappler were known as the Legionairres(name three)?
9. Handsome Tony Garea was a four time WWF tag team champion. Name each of his partners.
10. Chief Jay Strongbow regularly teamed with which WWF champion?
11. The Fabulous Freebirds are one of today's top teams. Name all three members.
12. One of the great tag teams of all time were the original Kangaroos. Name the members of this legendary team.
13. The Rock and Roll Express are flashy and flying. Name the members of this dynamic duo.
14. Which two blond bombers are known as the Fabulous Ones?
15. Dennis Condrey and Bobby Eaton are a rugged pair and amongst today's top teams. What name do they wrestle under?



16. Nick Bockwinkle was a great A.W.A. world champion. However, he was also a great tag team wrestler. Who was his long-time tag parnter?
17. Pat Patterson formed a legendary tag team with the same brutal individual who provides the answer for the previous question. Can you name Pat's veteran partner?
18. Which combination of the world famous Graham family held the WWF title in 1961?
19. Which combination of the Grahams held the belts in 1964?
20. Which brother tag team was composed of a "Butcher" and a "Mad Dog?"
21. Which two Indian teams held the WWF tag belts?
22. Former WWF champ Bob Backlund feuded with one tag team partner. Can you name this late, great wrestler?
23. Which tag team is known as the Minnesota Wrecking Crew?
24. Which of today's top tag teams come from New Zealand?
25. The Executioners were masked giants who ruled the WWF. Can you divulge their real identities?

IRON MIKE EINHORN- SELF MADE MILLIONAIRE & CASH FLOW EXPERT
(The Man Who Knows Wrestling Like The Palm Of His Hand)

Any part of this column may be reproduced without permission!

This year I'm claiming hookers as a medical expense on my tax returns.

Finally read Sammartino's book. It was quite a page turner. I understand it's in its second printing (the first printing was smudged)...

My three hobbies: 1) Sky diving
2) Big game hunting
3) Lying about my hobbies

When in New Jersey check out the Tick Tock diner on Route 3. There's eatin' at its finest.

I'm thinking about opening up a restaurant: all you can eat to go...

I'm against gun control. Guns don't kill people, bullets do. However, the guns make them go real fast.

I don't believe in hand guns. I mean I believe they exist, I've seen them.

If you live in a very bizarre neighborhood, Evan Ginzburg might be the boy next door.

You should see Evan in his skin-tight cat costume.

I feel BETTER than James Brown.

I find rap artists who are fat much less menacing than those who aren't.

It's been hot here lately...I'm sweating like a piece of rancid pork.

Why are people drinking Diet Coke? Because they're fat & thirsty! With the summer Olympics starting soon and professional basketball players involved, what's next? Sending professional wrestlers?

How about Sumo Rodeo?

Want to read a funny book? "Handling Sin"- by Michael Malone.

George "The Animal" Steele is teaching the voices in his head to speak French...

Vince McMahon's tray table isn't in the upright & locked position, if you know what I mean...

In closing, remember: never buy a hat when you're drunk.

A HISTORY OF THE VON ERICHS IN ST. LOUIS

BY: DON GENE SMITH

Part Three - 1980

To usher in 1980, two Von Erichs were involved in title matches at Kiel on January 4. In the special feature, Kevin retained the Missouri State Championship against Dick Murdoch while in the main event David again failed to wrest the world crown from Harley Race. Then:

January 25 - David & Sailor Art Thomas beat Lord Alfred Hayes & "Bulldog" Bob Brown.

Kevin pinned Jack Brisco to retain the Missouri State Championship (fans considered Kevin the underdog in this match, and this victory against a former world champion raised his status considerably).

February 8 - Kevin beat Dick Murdoch to retain the Missouri State Championship.

David & King Kong Brody wrestled to a double disqualification.

February 22 - David beat Lord Alfred Hayes.

Harley Race successfully defended the NWA World Championship against Kevin.

March 7 - Kevin beat Ed "Wolf" Wiskoski (later to be Colonel DeBeers).

David & Dick the Bruiser beat "Bulldog" Bob Brown and King Kong Brody.

March 28 - Dick Murdoch & King Kong Brody beat Kevin & Jerry Oates (Brody pinned Oates in the deciding fall).

April 11 - Kevin successfully defended the Missouri State Championship against King Kong Brody.

On April 25, Ken Patera's used his swinging neckbreaker to force a submission from Kevin and win the Missouri State Championship. In the return match on May16, Patera successfully defended his title. After that, David returned:

June 13 - David beat "Bulldog" Bob Brown

July 12 - David pinned Ric Flair with a front rolling cradle.

THE PROGRAM

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1980 — 8:30 P.M.

KIEL AUDITORIUM

14th & Market Sts. St. Louis, Mo.

THE MAIN EVENT

For the World Heavyweight Championship
As Recognized by the National Wrestling Alliance

Harley Race
248, Kansas City, Mo.
World Heavyweight Champion

Vs.

Kevin Von Erich.
235, Denton, Texas
Missouri State Champion

THE SPECIAL ATTRACTION
Lord Alfred Hayes
240, Windermere, England
Vs.
David Von Erich
236, Denton, Texas
One fall, 30 minute time limit

THE FIFTH MATCH
"Sailor" Art Thomas
265, Madison, Wisc.
Vs.
"King Kong" Brody
283, Santa Fe, N.M.
One fall, 30 minute time limit

THE FOURTH MATCH
Jack Brisco
234, Blackwell, Okla.
Former World Champion
Vs.
"Bulldog" Bob Brown
241, Winnipeg, Canada
One fall, 30 minute time limit

THE THIRD EVENT
An Australian Tag Team Match
Pak-Son
273, Seoul, Korea
and
Takachiho
240, Yokohama, Japan
Vs.
Tom Andrews
240, Sacramento, Calif.
and
Pat O'Connor
235, Wellington, N.Z.
Former World Champion
One fall, 20 minute time limit

THE SECOND MATCH
Tommy Sharp, 237, Amarillo, Texas
Vs.
Ed "Wolf" Wiskoski, 264, St. Joseph, Mo.
One fall, 20 minute time limit

THE OPENING BOUT
An Australian Tag Team Match
Ron McFarlane, 256, Topeka, Kan.
and
Billy Howard, 232, Duluth, Minn.
Vs.
Kerry Brown, 238, Winnipeg, Canada
and
Eddie Gilbert, 222, Lexington, Tenn.
Two out of three falls, 30 minute time limit
Two minute rest period between falls

Fans Have Disgust for Idiot Who Throws

Throwing is for fools, because nobody with even an ounce of intelligence would be stupid enough to hurl something during any event. Wrestling fans know only an idiot would throw anything.

The St. Louis Wrestling Club offers a reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of anyone who is dumb enough to throw.

DON'T FORGET TO SEND IN YOUR RENEWALS TODAY!!! SUPPORT WRESTLING'S ONLY NOSTALGIA SHEET

On August 8, David faced Baron Von Raschke in a "battle of the claws." In all my years of following wrestling I can't remember seeing more heat in a match than I saw in that one. The giant crowd was really into it, roaring as the advantage changed hands. Then, suddenly Von Raschke had the claw on David in the middle of the ring. The crowd went wild stomping its feet - stomping and stomping until the Kiel was one mass of deafening sound. Then David sunk to his knees. Von Raschke followed, still applying the claw. As though to tease the crowd, David wiped his claw hand across the mat to dry it in preparation for his comeback. I didn't think the crowd could get any wilder, but then it did! David responded by gripping Von Raschke's head with the claw, and the two men, both on their knees, strained to achieve the win. Finally Von Raschke's hand loosened and dropped from David's face. As the crowd popped as much as a crowd can pop, Von Raschke sunk to the canvas for the three count. It was a predictable, yet perfectly worked match between David and Von Raschke, one that I will never forget.

On the same card Kevin teamed with Pat O' Connor, Rufus Jones, & Dick the Bruiser against Dick Murdoch, Takachiho, Roger Kirby, and Killer Karl Kox. The Von Erich saga continued:

September 12 - David & Rufus Jones beat King Kong Brody & Takachiho

October 3 - Harley Race successfully defended the NWA World Championship against David.

Kevin beat Takachiho.

October 24 - Kevin & Rufus R. Jones beat Bob Sweetan & Mike George.

David beat Buck Robley.

November 7 - Kevin beat Billy Howard (third match on the card).

December 5 - Kevin beat Kerry Brown (third match on the card)

David beat Takachiho (fourth match on the card)

As 1980 ended the Von Erichs were wrestling lower on the card as the main events and special attractions went to Race, Flair, Patera, DeBiase, Brody, and others.

David Von Erich, Lord Hayes Skirmish

Lord Alfred Hayes and David Von Erich are both after revenge on the Kiel Auditorium wrestling slate Friday, Feb. 22.

The reason Hayes wants revenge is that David pinned the arrogant Englishman to end a furious tag team affair Jan. 25.

The reason David wants revenge is that Hayes personally eliminated David from a 16-man Wrestle Royal Jan. 25 by pitching the lean, powerful Von Erich over the top rope.

Hayes contends that Von Erich cannot cope with Lord Alfred in head-to-head warfare. "Look at my credentials around the world," ordered Hayes, a past British Heavyweight Champion. "I have holds this poor lad has never even seen."

What about the Iron Claw used by Von Erich? "I defy David Von Erich to try the Iron Claw on me. I dare him!" Hayes declared.

Kevin Profits From Early Training

How much does experience mean to a skilled young grappler? In the case of 22-year-old Kevin Von Erich, experience often spells the difference between victory and defeat.

Of course, neither Kevin nor his brother David qualifies as the average newcomer. Both have been on the mats regularly since they were toddlers, thanks to the influence of their father Fritz.

The legacy of the Iron Claw, invented and perfected by Fritz, was passed on to the boys. More importantly, perhaps, Fritz also made absolutely sure that his sons were exposed to all kinds of styles and all types of situations.

This training today pays off in the remarkable poise and instinct both Kevin and David display. After all, Kevin needed more than pure ability to slip past the likes of Jack Brisco and Dick Murdoch.

As Kevin prepares for his attempt to take the World Heavyweight Championship from Harley Race Feb. 22, every top star is trying to find the chink in the Von Erich armor.

Race, though, cannot wait long as experience continues to fuel the rapid rise of the Von Erichs.

Wrestling

Vol. 24 Warwick Hotel, St. Louis, Mo., March 21, 1980 No. 6

Flashy Flair, Race Duel March 28, as Brody, Murdoch Combine To Combat Oates, Kevin

AN INTERVIEW WITH SLAMMERS' VERNE LANGDON

EG: When did you first start watching wrestling and what were your earliest memories?

VL: My earliest memories were wrestling my way out of my mother's womb. I've been wrestling since I was a little kid- since I was 5 years old. I've always done it. I've done it more than I've done anything else. I think I've probably wrestled more than anybody else in wrestling or interested in wrestling. I started watching it on TV about the time we were able to get a TV set. We were the last family in our neighborhood to get one which would have been about 1949 or so. But I never really enjoyed watching it half as much as I enjoyed doing it to the point that I say at Slammers, here, Slammers is for people who do- not for people who view- unless they're here to view the museum.

EG: Wrestling was huge in the 50's on television. Can you tell us about your memories?

VL: Gorgeous George was where it was at as far as wrestling was concerned. He did more singlehandedly for the sport than any single wrestler. Some other notables were bouncing Genito Gardini, Baron Leone, and Billy Vargas. I always went to matches with my dad. He's probably the only other person who loved it as much as me. We had wonderful Wednesday nites at the San Jose Civic Auditorium watching pro wrestling.

EG: Do you have any memories of matches that you saw live?

VL: Not especially. I remember pieces of matches of people I later got to know personally. The Sharpe Brothers: Mike and Ben. Or Gorgeous. Or the Torres Brothers- Ramon and Enrique- I remember all of their matches because they were terrific athletes, and put on really strong exhibitions.

EG: John Tolos also had very good things to say about the Sharpe Brothers when I interviewed him. Verne, how did you break into the business?

VL: When I was in college I did radio. I had a radio show and it started out 1 hour a nite, one nite a week, and when I finished I was on seven nites a week and 5 mornings, 4 hours each morn. I was the most listned to radio personality in that period in the San Francisco Bay area and I tied all my activities into that. I started doing interviews backstage at the wrestling matches- probably the first radio personality to do that. Then I got to know alot of the athletes and more than one of them said "Why don't you be a wrestler? You're big enough and probably fast enough." So that's how I got into wrestling. I worked out with some of the biggest names in the business.

EG: For people who don't know, can you tell them about Slammers in general?

VL: Slammers is the only place of its kind in the world where you can walk in off the street and rent a professional wrestling ring and get in there and do it. If you want instruction it's available to you but we don't push it on anybody. We don't glare at you if you're not a student, but we do have career planning if they want.

I start them out with the basic holds and basic falls and then Darren MacMillan gets them up in the air with the sunset flips and dropkicks and all that. If they manage to last that long, Sam Houston comes in and puts the finishing touches on them. Probably one of if not the only wrestling schools in the world that DOESN'T promise you your first match. We're interested in your second match and third match and fourth match and if you don't have what it takes, you won't get a second match. So we're more concerned with teaching you how to wrestle than selling you lessons.

EG: Sam Houston is a great athlete. Unfortunately at this time in wrestling, somebody's who's not a huge physical specimen doesn't get the break that others might with less talent. How do you feel about this?

STARS OF SLAMMERS VIDEO- $35 & $5 POSTAGE

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VL: But on the other hand, he's always managed to work, and a lot of the guys in the business haven't for one reason or another. Sam is a reliable athlete, a good steady wrestler. He's not over-sized- he's taller than I am and I'm 6'2"- he's as strong as I am if not stronger, and he throws me around no problem and I'm a good 255 pounds. He can hold his own. The size situation in wrestling is unfortunate, but stupidly people are running around blaming Vince McMahon for that and I know steroid abuse was going on in the 60's long before Vince McMahon ever got involved carrying the torch with the WWF. But then I'm so sick and tired of people bashing Vince McMahon it isn't even funny. If it wasn't for Vince McMahon we might not have wrestling as we know it today, which means we might not even have much wrestling today. I have some very happy memories of the old days, and don't mistake me- you know I read your publication. I enjoy reading your publication. I don't read things I don't enjoy. I think you turn out one of the better so-called zines or newsletters or whatever you want to call it. Yours has depth to it and it's a pleasure reading it. I'm one of the people who keep an eye on the good old days because I have love for them, that's where I grew up and where I learned. It's like staying completely welded on Judy Garland or Al Jolsen and you don't give credit to the other people in the world today. There are incredible athletes in pro wrestling today, many of whom are working for the WWF. And I think wrestling always has been and always will be the greatest sport.

Thanks to people like Vince McMahon it's going to be that for a very long time to come.

EG: In the past year in my newsletter, I've had interviews with Al Costello, Afa the Wild Samoan and I have an upcoming one with Sweet Daddy Siki. They're all involved with wrestling schools. How would you distinguish what you're doing from other schools?

VL: Primarily, and I think the most important thing is to look at the history of wrestling schools. There was a time when there wasn't a wrestling school. You would go to a promotion and you might get to know the promoter and one of the wrestlers that worked for him and maybe they'd take you under their wing and teach you. Later on it became kind of a second way to make a living. If you got laid off or quit or whatever and were between jobs you'd open up someplace, start a little school, bring in a few people people and make some money. Then you'd be on your way again. I'm not referring to the people you just mentioned because I'm not familiar with their operations. But I am familiar with operations that have come and gone where pro wrestlers for lack of anything better to do, and in need of a few bucks, will open a place, hang their shingle out and say they'll train you to be a pro wrestler. They take your $3,500 or $4,000 or $5,000, work with you a few weeks and all of a sudden get a call from Arizona, Hawaii or whatever and "Listen kid, I'll call you when I get back in town," and never do becuase they don't live wherever you are. So I think for the most part it's a means to an end. Somebody said to me not too long ago, "Well, the only person you should train with is somebody you heard of who was a big name in wrestling." Not really. A big name wrestler does not necessarily make a good teacher at all. In fact I haven't found too many big, big names in wrestling that can teach anybody anything. On the other hand you find people who have been in and out of it, here and there, now and then who do real well as teachers. Sam Houston is probably one of the finest teachers I've ever seen. I think he's terrific because he has the gift for teaching. And it takes a specific gift to teach.

EG: I'm a teacher- of English.

VL: O.K. Somebody doesn't just walk in- a big name movie star- and teach English. It just doesn't work that way. Otherwise, Mae West and Cary Grant and Sophia Loren and Tom Cruise would've all been teachers of English if they didn't have anything better to do, which would've been about the same thing.

EG: You've attained a great deal of media exposure as opposed to some schools who have been unable to. Can you explain your success in this area?

NEXT ISSUE'S INTERVIEW: THE LEGENDARY SWEET DADDY SIKI

EVERY ISSUE ENJOY A DIFFERENT INTERVIEW

VL: Well, we've offered something that hasn't existed before. Where else can you find a professional wrestling ring and a Greco-Roman wrestling mat and a wrestling museum all under one roof? There ain't no such thing! That's part of it and the other thing is the media comes and sees if there is something here for them to look at. We don't just SAY that we have students, we HAVE students. At any given time you were to walk in there, you'd find individual instruction going on or grunt group which is a combination of students doing group drill or you'd find Sam Houston doing his lessons or Darren McMillan, myself, or people working on the mat collegiate free style. So we're a work in progress and we're active and we've been here over three years and it works. We know how it works. When I went into this business I said there must be some reason nobody's done this before and so far I've found 50 or 60 reasons. But we know the secrets now and then. Somebody'll say "I thought of it" or "I think we're going to do it too," and I say to myself, "Good luck to you!" We'll franchise but we're 2 or 3 years away from that.

EG: Your museum is beautiful. Can you tell us how you feel about preserving wrestling history?

VL: I feel very strongly about preserving history period. I'm not the kind of person who has 17 hardbound copies of Dracula signed by Bram Stoker. I'm not a collector- never have been- and hope never to be. I know too many of them- Forrest Ackerman's a personal friend of mine.

EG: From Famous Monsters...

VL: Famous Monsters...yeah. If you've ever been to his home and go to his refrigerator for a soda, you'd find it full of film because he has no place else to keep the film. You go away thirsty and baffled that anyone would devote his life to saving all that crap. On the other hand if Hollywood had been a little more conscientious about it, we would have had a museum to preserve the great film industry instead of auctioning off the Cowardly Lion's costume to some dentist or someone who'll wear it to 2 Halloween parties and we'll never see it again. When I started this concept and place the first thing that happened was Gorgeous George memorabilia became available to me. And it was practically an afterthought but I said "Yeah, I knew him. I'd like to see that stuff displayed so people can enjoy it." You would be amazed by the stories of how each item came and which way. You know I'm a fatalist, but it's almost like he was directing this person to bring me this, and this person to bring me this. It got quite eerie and remains so. So I started with the Gorgeous George memorabilia and then this wrestler and that wrestler and this poster collection and that tape and this film and now we're a source house for the industry. They use it for reference. It's very rewarding

because I think our history must be preserved and I think the sport of wrestling- there's a baseball hall of fame, a basketball hall of fame, even a boxing hall of fame-- and wrestling's only had a few collector's here and there who covet someone's jacket or stills or this wrestler or that wrestler. And that's great, but I think it's rather stupid and selfish to stuff it in your den and not share it with as many people as possible.

EG: Can you tell us about some of your memories of some of the wrestlers in your museum?

VL: Well, Moolah's the love of my life. Of all the people I know she's the sweetest, most generous, most supportive, fantastic person of them all. Billy Varga's right in there too. And John Tolos is right in there also. I've been fortunate enough to know people like this. And Vic Christy- many, many years ago a champ. I know quite a few of the new people- Barry Wyndham, Roddy Piper's been here often, Sam Houston and his family, but Moolah's something extra special. A lot of us go back quite a ways. George Drake gave me my first wrestling lessons. He's since passed on but he was a helluva an athlete in his days at the San Jose Civic Auditorium and the Cow Palace in S.F. He was something. But I have very happy memories of all of them-- a fine buch of people and a fine collection of athletes and great personalities.

EG: Do you have any prospects here you think will be stars of the future?

SLAMMERS WRESTLING GYM™

P.O. Box 1602, Studio City,
California 91614

VL: I don't know. People always ask us that. The first thing they'll say is "We're thinking of going to your school but do you have anyone out there that's a star?" And my answer to that is our school, the University of Professional Wrestling, Slam U, has really evolved into that just recently. We started training informally over a year ago but we really got the method to our madness down now. So I really have to say we're almost starting fresh, and we've got some very good prospects. One fellow we trained, Darren and I, is our there and going to be in the sport a long time. And we've got people we're working with that's showing a lot of promise. I'm sure that sooner or later there will be an opportunity, because talent after all does rule out. That's the bottom line and that's why we're so conscientious. We're very careful of their safety and we want to see that 5 or 10 years from now if they want to change their profession they're not wheeled out in a wheelchair. We want them to keep all their marbles, their hips and elbows intact...

EG: How do you feel about the sheets?

VL: It depends. As I say, there are those newsletters who think it's real hip and real "in" to talk shop and to downgrade this wrestler and downgrade that promoter. And I always said any asshole can tear down a barn but it takes a real architect to build one. And I believe if you don't have anything constructive to contribute then don't say it. You know you can have 17 student teachers analyzing your work all day. My answer to them is the day you think you can teach my class better than me you better be up here, not me. And I think it's all well and good to sit there and write a newsletter but we don't bash Vince McMahon every chance we get and we don't tell the WCW how to run their operation or what's wrong with it. We're in the business of telling you what's going on at Slammers and what we do and how we do it. I think it's a little redundant to report all of the results of all of the cards across the country- one does it and they all do it. I think they're so many things that could be done in the way of newsletters that aren't being done. People will come along to that. As I say, yours is exceptional because it takes a wonderful period and alot of personal attachment and you're really sharing yourself as much as discussing what happened 30 years ago and it's a very interesting and wholely comfortable approach and I feel it's very constructive.

EG: THanks...what're your plans in the upcoming months?

VL: We're doing the Slammer's Wrestling Federation which is the SMALLEST wrestling federation with the FEWEST wrestling stars of them all (laughs). It's one that just exists here at Slammers. You know, some day we may get brave and go out there. I hope not. I think it's kind of neat to have an in-house federation. Nobody else does. And again, we're doing something nobody else has done.

EG: What are your hopes and aspirations for Slammers in the years ahead?

VL: That reminds me of the person who asked me the question right after we opened. He said, "Do you think we'll be a success some day?" I said, "Slammers is a success! We got it open!" (laughs). My aspiration for Slammers are what it is today. This very day. I never thought for a moment it would become what it has become. I bought the ring to work out with the guys I work out with. And a few well-meaning but nosy friends talked me into opening it to the public. And one thing after another happened and Slammers kind of created itself, actually. I have no idea where it's going actually. But it's sure been a helluva lot of fun so far and I've met just in our inner circle here some of the most incredible people. We got a great little group...

EG: I think some people dream about a job or career where you can earn a living and do something you love, which is an accomplishment in itself...

VL: I've been lucky. I've had 9 careers and I've loved each one more than the last one. Some of them I still pursue. I'm also a composer, I'm also a writer, I'm also a producer, and I do windows (laughs)! But this is the only job that I've ever created for myself that I actually laugh on the way to work every day. In the car I am laughing, I am so happy. And outside of your health, you couldn't ask for anything more. And I'm lucky I've got that too.

EG: Is there anything you'd like to add?

VL: Just to tell your readers to keep reading Wrestling-Then & Now. It's one of the best publications in the world and to tell them to keep going to the matches, whenever they can. Support the WWF. Support WCW. Support the small promotions, because wrestling is not an individual activity and it's not an individual sport. We're all part of one big family. We love wrestling. Or we love to watch wrestling. But it's really bigger than the human race.

NEXT ISSUE:

THE CONCLUSION OF VON ERICHS IN ST. LOUIS, THE TRIUMPHANT RETURN OF VIC STANLEY AND DR. MIKE LAND, IRON MIKE EINHORN, DAVID WILLIAMSON DEBUTS, RON DOBRATZ ON CHICAGO 1952, AN EXTENSIVE INTERVIEW WITH SWEET DADDY SIKI, RARE CLIPPINGS, GREAT ART AND MUCH, MUCH MORE!

Mark S. Hewitt
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WAY BACK IN ....
1920

As the year of 1920 dawned, there was confusion over who actually was the heavyweight wrestling champion of the world. The title picture had been unclear since the retirement of the undefeated champion, Frank Gotch, in 1913. There is a succession of title claimants following Gotch; but none of these men, Jesse Westergaard, Charlie Cutler, Dr. B. F. Roller, Joe Stecher, or Earl Caddock received national recognition.

Caddock threw Stecher in 1917 and claimed to be the champ. But, when America entered World War I, he promptly enlisted in the Army. After his training, Caddock was sent into combat overseas. The wrestling championship was put into mothballs. Stecher, Wladek Zbyszko, and Ed "Strangler" Lewis all sought to usurp the crown. Zbyszko's older brother, Stanislaus, also figured in the title rivalry, but was trapped in Russia at the outbreak of war.

The title mess was finally cleared up on January 30, 1920, at Madison Square Garden. Jack Curley promoted the contest between Stecher and Caddock, back from the war. It was billed for the world wrestling championship. In an epic struggle, Joe Stecher, the "scissors king", defeated Earl Caddock, "the man of a thousand holds".

Stecher would not finish out the year with the title still in his grasp. On December 13, 1920, at the 71st Regimental Armory in New York City, Stecher was beaten by Strangler Lewis. Six months earlier, Stecher had managed to pin Lewis after 3 hours, 4 minutes and 15 seconds of terrific battling. In their rematch, the Strangler was able to subdue the champion with his devastating headlock. After the bout, both wrestlers were so exhausted chairs had to be brought into the ring for them to sit in.

Shortly after losing to Lewis, Stecher was hospitalized with paralysis in his left arm. The infirmity was traced to the effects of Strangler Lewis's skull-crushing head hold.

Ed Lewis, along with his manager Billy Sandow, formed a powerful team which figured prominently in the sport until 1931, when they parted ways. Their influence on the development of the mat game is a big part of the heritage of pro wrestling.

Also in the year 1920, Stanislaus Zbyszko returned to the U.S. and began building himself up into top contender status. Jimmy Londos first gained prominence as the "Greek champion". Out Nebraska way, "Tigerman" John Pesek was becoming a force to be reckoned with. Former amateur champ and Olympic medalist, Nat Pendleton, broke into the pro ranks. A formidable "trust-buster", Marin Plestina, relentlessly challenged the champions and leading contenders, but to no avail.

The light heavyweight championship was claimed by both Clarence Eklund and Ad Ernst Santel. The middleweight honors were given to Mike Yokel, and the welterweight champ was Louis Nelson.

Pro wrestling cards were held throughout the United States and Canada, in both large arenas and small theatres. Nearly every circus, wild west show and carnival featured an athletic show with a "champion wrestler" taking-on-all-comers.

The 1920's are remembered as "the golden age of American sports", and professional wrestling was one of the major spectator attractions. Strangler Lewis was as well known a sports celebrity, back then, as Jack Dempsey, Babe Ruth and Red Grange.

STUART BRYNIEN'S WRESTLING LOVE STORY!

Julie and I have seen a lot of wrestling over the years, both live and on television, but I'll always remember that one of the very first things we ever saw together was a WWF show at Madison Square Garden.

It was shortly before we began dating, while we were still "just friends." (We had known each other casually since college.) I called her up after work; it had been a few weeks since our last conversation, and I wanted to know if she was available for a movie.

Before I could ask her, though, we got around to talking about what we'd been doing. "Well," she said, after I had shared with her all the news about what I had been up to--which, besides going to work, wasn't much--"the other night I went to the Garden to see the...matches."

How could I not have noticed the little beat, the almost imperceptible pause, before that last word--"matches?" Don't ask me how, but I knew--I already KNEW--what she meant; already, I guess, we were operating on the same wavelength.

I played dumb. "Uh--the tennis matches?" I asked innocently.

"No..." she said. Then, bravely: "The WRESTLING matches."

I smiled. "You mean YOU'RE a wrestling fan, too?"

And that's how we discovered each other's dirty little secret. It turned out that she, too, had first been introduced to the fun and excitement of professional wrestling by watching it on T.V. as a kid. In no time at all we were dropping the names of wrestlers, managers, and announcers, of our favorite heroes and favorite heels; much to my surprise, she was a real big fan of one of the WWF's most vicious villains, Don "The Magnificent" Muraco.

One thing she could talk about that I couldn't, however, was the action at Madison Square Garden (already--as Gorilla Monsoon would one day christen it--the "mecca" of professional wrestling). She had gone to see quite a few cards there, while I hadn't been there, yet--not for wrestling, anyway.

Well, that's when she invited me to come along the next time she went to a show. She wasn't asking me out on a date, she reminded me--she was only asking me as a friend. She would pay her way, and I would pay mine.

Naturally--thoughts of what all of this might lead to dancing happily through my head--I said yes.

And so there we were three weeks later, front row mezzanine--and, as though the unexpected discovery that I was a kindred spirit was enough to convince her that maybe she SHOULD start seeing more of me, she said before the card was even over--right there, in the middle of twenty thousand screaming fans--that she wouldn't mind "dating" me, after all.

That was almost eight years ago, and we're STILL seeing each other. In fact, we're seeing more of each other than ever; eventually we took the plunge and got married!

IN THE DEVIL'S DEN

BY THE JERSEY DEVIL

THE TIMES THEY ARE A CHANGIN'

OR ARE THEY?

IT SEEMS THAT THE MORE THINGS CHANGE, THE MORE THINGS STAY THE SAME. JUST WHEN I THOUGHT THAT WCW WAS TURNING THE CORNER BY SIGNING STEAMBOAT & RUDE AS WELL AS BRINGING IN JUSHIN LIGER, THEY BORE ME INTO UNCONSCIOUSNESS WITH THEIR LATEST MEADOWLANDS SHOW WITH A TOTALLY UNINSPIRED CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH BETWEEN LUGER AND RICK STEINER. I JUST DON'T GET IT. NO WONDER GINZBERG'S MAKING MONEY ON A NOSTALGIA SHEET! IT'S ENOUGH TO MAKE A DROOLING TOOTHLESS GEEK WANT TO LONG FOR THE OLD DAYS WHEN CHAMPS LIKE BORING BRUNO AND HOWDY DOODY BACKLUND HELD THE CHAMPIONSHIP FOR TIME UNENDING! TRUST ME ON THIS ONE, HELL'S NOT MUCH WORSE THAN THAT!

JOEL GOODHART HIT IT RIGHT ON THE HEAD WHEN HE MENTIONED IN A RECENT INTERVIEW WITH MR PERSONALITY THAT THE INTERVIEW IS A LOST ART. I REMEMBER THE DAYS WHEN TBS INTERVIEWS WERE WORTH SITTING THROUGH MULKEY SQUASH MATCHES FOR. TULLY WITH BABY DOLL, THE FOUR HORSEMEN, THE ROAD WARRIORS, THE GREAT FLAIR AND EVEN DUSTY WARTHOG. YES, IT'S HARD FOR ME TO ADMIT THAT LAST ONE BUT I HAVE THIS SICK IMPULSE TO LOOK AT FREAKS AND THERE'S NO BIGGER FREAK THAN DUSTY. NOWADAYS, WE'VE GOT SCRIPTED PABLUM THAT WOULDN'T DRAW A FLY TO A COWCHIP THROWING CONTEST!

WELL, BEFORE I GET TOO CAUGHT UP IN ALL THIS LOOKING BACK DRIVEL, LET ME REMIND YOU OF ONE MORE CLICHE TOMORROW HERE, YESTERDAY'S GONE. DON'T GET LEFT IN THE DUST. OR DUSTY, IF YOU WEEUHL.

OFTEN IMITATED, NEVER DUPLICATED

THIS IS THE JERSEY DEVIL

FROM DEEP...IN THE SWAMPS....OF JERSEY

LETTERS TO WT&N

I derive a great deal of enjoyment from WT&N. Australia had a huge wrestling scene in the 1960's and early 1970's so many of the names you mention are familiar to us "down here." Reading your interviews and readers' recollections it's interesting to see how similar wrestling angles have been between different countries and just how recyclable ideas are in the wrestling world. I suppose it's no different to sitcoms which can only follow one of six possible plot lines.

I get a great kick out of seeing old posters and clippings from the past- some of the matchups are quite bizarre to Australians who remember certain wrestlers as only faces, whereas it's obvious from the posters just who the "baddies" were. As examples, Spiros Arion and the Brisco Brothers were always faces down here. Even after Arion turned on Sammartino in New York, he would tour here as a face.

A minor quibble with your newsletter is that the quality of the writing can be very variable. If you really are priding yourself on a quality literary product, as your editorials suggest, some of the pieces you've published should never have seen the light of day, or at best should have been edited very tightly. Similarly I see no point in plugging newsletters which turn out to be bird cage liner material.

I sympathize with all newsletter editors/publishers. Piledriver, as you're aware, is more of a magazine than a newsletter, but tries to cover the same areas as the traditional wrestling fan publications. Unfortunately the format we've chosen (because it sells the best) also means we need to typset the prose and get bromides for the photos- an expensive process. Due to the complete absence of wrestling on TV in this country we're now down to a hardcore readership and I'm not really sure that's enough for us to survive. To compensate, we do get hundreds of people writing in to the magazine expressing support- I wish they could all get their relatives to buy extra copies.

A number of things that make life complete:

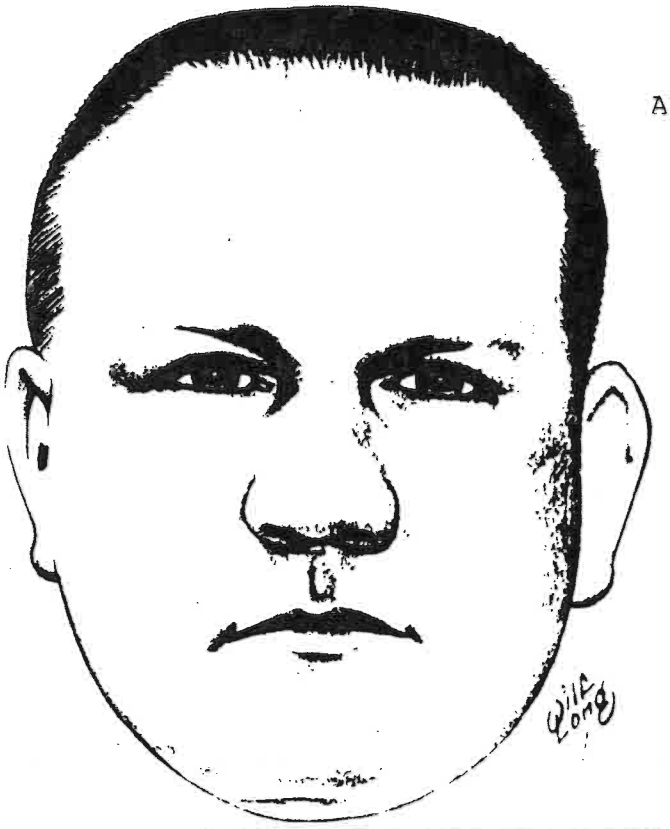
1. A new Ramones album
2. A sidesplitting episode of Cheers or Murphy Brown
3. Old Gary Shandling episodes
4. Seeing Debbie Harry live- but not after she's had a heavy meal.
5. Jushin Liger against a good comptetitor
6. Reading a freshly printed copy of Piledriver after art director Matt Holdsworthy has put the fininishing touches to it.
7. Peter Straub novels or even a James McElroy one.
8. Seeing Ric Flair get his due.
9. Having like minded friends over for a wrestling party and watching good WCW or Japanese matches. Alternatively, fast forwarding WWF matches and only turning the volume up for the interviews. (Did you see the one before Survivors where the Iron Sheik said "Ariba?" I killed myself.)
10. Like Vic Stanley, opening the post box to find newsletters, fan mail, catalogues and magazines.
11. An old Ramones album.

I hope you go on to publish many, many more issues of WT&N (may you live to be 120).

LAZARUS DOBELSKY
PO Box 34
Glenhuntly Vic 3163

EDITOR'S NOTE: Thanks for the interesting letter & a tremendous publication. Also wish my readers would tell a friend to tell a friend about WT&N: Nostalgia/wrestling history's such a tough, tough sell!.

WT&N
ART GALLERY



"GENE KINISKI"

GORILLA
MONSOON
1960's

BY: WAYNE
ST. WAYNE

BULLDOG BROWER

WT&N READER'S POLL 1992!

Thanks again to all who supported the annual and/or subscribed to WT&N. I need **YOUR** feedback to make WT&N the best it can possibly be. Please take the time to fill out the poll and send back to PO BOX 471 OAKLAND GARDENS STATION, FLUSHING NY 11364. Greatly appreciated!

1. My favorite columnist/feature in WT&N is/are _____
   _____

2. My least favorite columnist/feature in WT&N is/are _____
   _____

UNDERLINE THE CHOICE WHICH BEST DESCRIBES YOUR OPINION:

3. **ARTWORK:** PUBLISH MORE PUBLISH LESS APPROPRIATE AS IS

   NOSTALGIA CLIPPINGS: PUBLISH MORE PUBLISH LESS APPROPRIATE AS IS

   NOSTALGIA RESULTS: PUBLISH MORE PUBLISH LESS APPROPRIATE AS IS

   READERS' MEMORIES PUBLISH MORE PUBLISH LESS APPROPRIATE AS IS

4. If WT&N were to increase in size and price would you continue to support it? _____

5. What areas/wrestlers/time periods etc. would you like to see covered in WT&N? _____
   _____

6. WT&N tries to pack in as much material as possible each issue. How would you rate it's legibility/readabilty? (UNDERLINE ONE)

   PRINT MUCH TOO SMALL **PRINT A LITTLE TOO SMALL** **KEEP PACKING IT IN!**

7. How do you feel about WT&N's interviews? _____
   _____

8. What ideas do you have to promote WT&N? _____
   _____

9. Would you like to see more contests (trivia etc.) in WT&N? _____

10. **USE THE BACK OF THIS PAGE FOR ANY COMMENTS, CRITICISMS, SUGGESTIONS, ABOUT WT&N OR THE ANNUAL. YOUR INPUT IS NEEDED AND APPRECIATED.**

ALSO REMEMBER, YOU THE READER ARE ALWAYS WELCOME TO CONTRIBUTE TO WT&N SO SEND IN THOSE READER MEMORIES, LETTERS, READER PROFILES ETC.